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Symbols Support of Culture Transitions

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In the present article we have proposed that the symbol or rather the changing of the symbols system is able to support culture transitions. The essential attributes of the symbol (universality, differentiability, substantiveness, imperativeness, communicativeness, teleologicality, duality, polysemy), being developed throughout history, have been persistently displayed their regulative role in spiritual processes of transition from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture.

Similar considerations have been applied to the transition from gathering onto producing and consequently from gathering culture to the state of agriculture. Inventors of agriculture and their followers managed to have successfully combined their primitive concepts and their mysterious symbols thereby having also invented the first fundamental culture transition encouraged and supported by a process of replacing the lunar symbol with the solar symbol which emergence and self-determination was the most vivid symbolic embodiment of culture transition at the time.

Keywords: man, symbol, lunar symbolics, solar symbolics, primeval, civilization, culture transition, agriculture.

Introduction

At present more and more scholars have been arguing that our long history can be seen to fit patterns. The American sociologist and futurologist Alvin Toffler proved to be the most brilliant among them. And he sees this pattern in the shape of three huge waves with the result of their long-range effects in the three great subsequent civilizations: Agricultural, Industrial, and an advance of an entirely New Civilization which wealth creation system he presciently calls “the super-symbolic economy.” A.Toffler asserts that the “new system for making wealth is totally dependent on the instant communication

and dissemination of data, ideas, symbols, and symbolism. It is, as we will discover, a super-symbolic economy in the exact sense of that term. Its arrival is transformational.” (Toffler, 2001, pp.44-45)

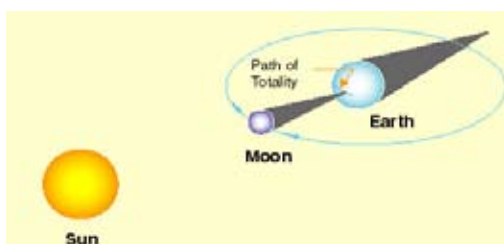
In his most famous book “The Third Wave” (Toffler, 1981) A.Toffler argues that the first wave of transformation began about 10,000 years ago when a most prescient person, probably a clever woman planted a seed and nurtured its growth for the future. She must have been a “pre-historic Einstein.” That way the age of agriculture started its victorious advance all over the *oikoumene* and more and more numerous tribes moved away from

nomadic wandering with gathering and hunting and began to build their villages and develop a new culture, i.e. the agriculture.

“There is no generally accepted view of the causes of transition to agriculture” (Alexeyev, 1984, p.417 (The translation is ours. – D.A., N.I.)). Nevertheless we can investigate those conditions that could more or less affect the utterly complicate revolutionary process of transition from solely consuming towards producing economies. Closer analysis of the transition causes from climatic changes to subconscious selection made for refuting any as a conclusive one “since the process of transition from consuming to producing economy was most complicate and it enveloped all or almost all the aspects of life of primitive anthropogeocenoses” (Ibidem). It seems plausible that one of the numerous aspects was the fact that heavenly bodies attracted the emergent man’s active visual perception. And it was natural that the heavenly phenomena observed with the naked eye, were connected by our ancestors with rudiments of their primitive social life, that is in fact they were somehow or rather interpreted or symbolized. Just to exemplify, the tribal systems of collective relations were programmed by natural rhythms among which the most immediate were sunrise and sunset and alterations of the phases of the Moon. Along with these regularities there sometimes happened solar and lunar eclipses—miraculous and enigmatic heavenly phenomena at the time.

Symbols and culture transitions

Since the very beginning of human history evolving people have ever been involved in complex and contradictory mutual relations which have always been symbolically supported. Symbols could flash and their exchange could operate only in evolving collective relations. Jean Baudrillard argues that “symbolic exchange... creates a transitional, unstable state of sociality” (Baudrillard, 2000, p.29). In our opinion, creating any sociality, especially a civilization, goes hand in hand with creating new symbols. The Agricultural Civilization could not escape the common lot when it slowly but surely superseded tribal cultures of the Zero Wave. And our future civilization will also have to throw in this lot with the previous ones. Undoubtedly much will depend on people’s creating new symbols, whether the future postindustrial civilization or whatever it will be called, will suffer or benefit from the same fate. It is obvious that culture transition involves a great amount of accumulated raw data. The discrete data contextually placed become information which is then configured to become knowledge. And only knowledge can be compressed up to symbols which can affect social relations greatly and deeply. That is extremely significant with the symbolics of the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia. As a matter of fact, now all political movements use symbolism to reinforce their beliefs in the public. For instance,



A Solar eclipse (not to scale) <http://csep10.phys.utk.edu/astr161/lect/>



A Lunar Eclipse (not to scale) http://csep10.phys.utk.edu/astr161/lect/time/eclipses_lunar.html



Barack Obama's sigil in his presidential campaign, 2012

Barack Obama used a “solar symbol” as his movement's sigil. It symbolized the new age, the new dawn, and age of reason.

In general various approaches to the definition of the symbol require not only and not so much knowledge of specific symbols but abstracting from them and transcending many parameters of the symbol altogether. The symbol in its own nature is dualistic because it unites its two aspects: external (a phenomenological form) and internal (an ontological content). These aspects of the symbol reveal both the gnoseological range of problems of its sense and structure and the ontological field of imperative space of the symbolic sphere. In this paper our undivided attention has been drawn by the former. We could find a support for our viewpoint in the “Theories of the Symbol” by the Franco-Bulgarian philosopher Tzvetan Todorov who explained the title of his insightful book as follows, “The symbol—the thing itself, not the word—is the object of this book” (Todorov, 1982, p.9).

Our investigation of the ontological aspects of the symbol as “the thing itself” has led us to define it as an intuitive spiritual origin manifested in the relationship of man and the world as signs, images, metaphors that develop

communicative, psychological, and semantic environment of human existence and shape and reshape a symbolic reality. The ontological aspects of the symbol are reflected in the following essential characteristics: universality, differentiability, substantiveness, imperativeness, communicativeness, teleologicality, duality, polysemy.

Symbol... symbolics... symbolical... On the one hand, symbolical payment actually means so little to pay that it is considered to be no payment at all. On the other hand, symbolic means something so much that it is able to mean everything. When this word flies off our tongue or when it sounds in our ears we are in two minds about its meaning: whether in something does it denote ephemeral or permanent, changeable or stable, volatile or durable, temporary or enduring, brief or perennial, short-lived or long-lived, inconstant or constant, occasional or continual, transient or abiding, ending or lasting, momentary or perpetual, temporal or eternal, etc. And all these epithets are rooted in the following dilemma: either symbol concretizes, i.e. gives a tangible form to the abstract thus being just an allegory or it abstracts the concrete thus being essentially a Kantian symbol. Kant claimed that images of things or contemplations were considered as symbols. The notions of reason could be applied to these contemplations. Therefore symbols in contrast to signs are significant themselves because they are tools of representation through conceptions (Kant, 1994, p.215). In so doing the symbolized idea of mind is signified by the analogy with the contemplation. In this wise the symbol or rather the changing of the symbols system is able to support culture transitions.

Cultures as if eternal Heraclitean fire blazes in them either storming in Dionysian dancing or smouldering in Apollonian dreams, transit from one state into another. Man's incessant spiritual search has been indicative of these

processes since the time immemorial. Spiritual processes in cultures are normally developed in the spatial field of a symbolic sphere and finally can blow it up. Globalization has emerged as an unprecedented accelerator to facilitate these processes. The symbol as the everlasting primeval mover possessing two energies (regulating and chaotizing), regulates the development of spiritual processes of culture transitions. The essential attributes of the symbol (universality, differentiability, substantiveness, imperativeness, communicativeness, teleologicality, duality, polysemy), being developed throughout history, have been persistently displayed their regulative role in spiritual processes of culture transitions from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture. It was likely that the same pattern could have framed the transition from gathering onto producing and consequently from gathering culture to the state of agriculture.

At present it is well known that primordial nomadic groups of people were entirely dependent upon their hunting, fishing and gathering just like many other animals including ape-like sub-human ancestors. All our human ancestors had been hunting and gathering since emergence of man millions years ago to 12-10 thousand years ago. Although they were no more than just hunters and gatherers before the age of agriculture, there is much evidence of their skills and arts. Rock paintings and carvings, engravings and bone statuettes dated 35-40 thousand years ago are but a few marks of rudimentary symbolizing. So our hypothesis is that along with survival there was born a process of symbolization. Plenty of marvelous prehistoric petroglyphs are irrefutable evidence in favor of the origin of homo sapiens. That revolution can be explained on the following hypothesis: the anthropological Rubicon was then crossed if and only if there had emerged the phenomenon of symbolizing which was naturally connected with tool making. A verisimilar



Fantasy Figure Gallery – Luna by Dorian Cleavenger

symbolic practice is hinted with as far back as Neandertals' deliberate burying their dead. The famous French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan also happened to consider a cist to be the first symbol in which we can recognize mankind by its remains (Lacan, 1995, p.89).

In the course of time the power of symbolizing could be exercised further on. In our opinion, the process of changing that former primeval *modus vivendi* which was closer to animals than to future man, could not help largely depending on the symbol as an intangible phenomenon developed on the basis of perceiving and then using some singled natural phenomena to represent essential events in man's primitive life. Subsequently continuous night hunting accounted for the abundance and strength of lunar cults and later lunar symbolism because moonlight had ever been of great importance for the success of game hunting.

Besides the Moon served as one of the incipient measures of time. The first calendars were devised on the basis of lunar phases. Finally the powerful lunar symbolism had been spreading worldwide. The symbol started to slowly but surely acquire its own features connected with beyond. Here we consider the beyond as universality (transcendentality in the Kantian sense: "...the

word ‘transcendental’...doesn’t signify something that goes beyond all experience, but something that does indeed precede experience a priori, but whose role is simply to make knowledge through experience possible.” (Kant, 2010–2015, footnote 16 on p.77)).

In other words it is the creative aspect of the symbol, *id est* man’s ability to experience not only existent being but imaginary being as well. Man’s fertile imagination is largely realized through symbols and the man-made world as the world of human culture is indeed the world of symbols determining man’s life. Plato was the first philosopher to have combined the existent and the imaginary worlds in the idea—a combination of the concept and the symbol. Some thinkers including Plato himself digressed from Plato’s ideal world to scholasticism as they made successful and unsuccessful attempts to arrest change. They drew inspiration from the works by the mythographers Homer and Hesiod. Their concepts predominated over their symbols. Some other thinkers digressed from Plato’s ideal world to mysticism. They drew inspiration from the philosophy of Heraclitus of Ephesus who argued for a law-like interchange of elements, symbolized by fire. Their symbols predominated over their concepts.

It is conceivable that inventors of agriculture and their followers managed to have successfully combined their primitive concepts and their mysterious symbols thereby having also invented the first fundamental culture transition encouraged and supported by a process of replacing the lunar symbol with the solar symbol which emergence and self-determination was the most vivid symbolic embodiment of culture transition at the time.

On the basis of researching the symbolical phenomena by J.Baudrillard, A.Bely, U.Eco, M.Eliade, I.Kant, J.Lacan, A.F.Losev, F.Nietzsche, K.A.Svasyan, Tzvetan Todorov

and many other scientists we made an attempt to elaborate on regulatory agents of symbolical knowledge through the features which are coherently connected with appropriate essential attributes of the symbol. They are the following: **universality, differentiability, substantiveness, imperativeness, communicativeness, teleologicality, duality, polysemy.** These features are metaphorically called either after the names of heroes or metaphors from philosophical and literary works to demonstrate the regulative role of the symbol in spiritual processes of culture transitions. As a result we have made an attempt to shed some light on symbols support of culture transition from primitive societies of hunters and gatherers to agricultural civilizations.

Universality of the symbol

The symbol is inherently universal and hence it is capable to unite senses. The symbol’s universality results from its primeval sense in the meaning of emerging and developing the humane in man. The feature of the symbolical knowledge corresponding to the given intrinsic attribute of the symbol—universality, is “Pandora” who possesses everything and symbolically unites everything. Those were both the Moon and the Sun. Objects, properties, relations are all united in a universal symbol, e.g. “the moon is a feminine symbol, universally representing the rhythm of time as it embodies the cycle” (Dictionary of Symbolism, 2001, Moon).

On the other hand, the Sun was as universal as the Moon and moreover it was later considered as the universal Deity in fully developed agricultural civilizations, e.g. ancient Egypt and pre-Columbian Meso-American cultures. “The primitive mind, recognizing the beneficent power of the solar orb, adored it as the proxy of the Supreme Deity” (Hall, 1993, p.139). Thus, man having switched over to another way of surviving,

managed to switch over to the most influential symbol of the daytime. Moreover, in daily life the solar symbol was stronger than the lunar symbol as the former could influence not only hunters who were mostly robust men but women and children and the aged, too. So universality turned out to develop on a more numerous and brilliant basis. Later in the course of developing patriarchy, the Sun was interpreted as the universal father, while the Moon held the universal mother. "The sun is the absolute cosmic power; it is the universal FATHER, while the MOON is the universal MOTHER; it is often symbolized by the WHEEL or the disk, a CIRCLE or a BALL; it is the center of being and intuition, it is knowledge and warmth, glory and splendour." (Dictionary of Symbolism, 2001, Sun).

Universality of the symbol in the contemporary world has just been appreciably realized in the global functioning of the Internet which power over minds is already comparable to the powerful influence of the conventional mass-media. With the emergence of the World Wide Web the symbolical universality has moved to the cultural universality which is still stronger and almost ubiquitous. The Internet is largely turning to an original virtual culture with its own language, art, mythology, and probably religion.

According to the Canadian scientist R.Logan's investigations into the evolutionary chain of languages, man has to master today the sixth and latest language—the Internet. As a consequence of and together with speech, writing, mathematics, science, and computing, we can see now the birth and rapid development of Internet communications. Professor R.Logan specifies five distinct periods in the development of Homo sapiens language communication: the age of non-verbal mimetic communication; the age of orality; the age of literacy; the age of electric mass media; and the age of digital interactive media. Transition of human communication from

one language technology to another does not eliminate the chance and necessity to use and improve a new technology upon the preceding. He draws our attention to the well-known fact of information overload of culture as the main cause of all new technologies emergence because from time to time man has to process an ever increasing amount of information within the narrower limits of old technologies of processing information. Every new language technology is developed on the basis of communicative properties of the previous cultural technologies, supplementing its own elements of reservation, storage, and retrieving information. Thus each of them has been leading not only to creating new symbolics and newly-coined language but also to information explosion and new problems which solving causes the emergence of the next form of language (Logan, 2000).

It is now clear that language in culture is not only a major means of human communication but also an irreplaceable information and technological tool of mastering the symbolic reality. Henceforth technological "extensions" of various human organs include information and technological "expansion" of man's nervous system and brain far beyond the limits of an organic body that leads to emergence of a new type of mentality featuring the planet transformation into a "global village" with universal symbolics. Thus, the regulating energy of the symbol introduces universal harmony of various senses in culture and creates new traditions, thereby promoting culture transition from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture. At the dawn of humanity it was the changeover from the lunar symbolics to the solar symbolics that supported the culture transition to agricultural civilization. People created something new while trying hard to accumulatively retain the old. "The phases of the moon symbolize immortality and eternity, enlightenment or the dark side of Nature herself"

(Dictionary of Symbolism, Moon). Therefore we can still find plenty of evidence of attractive poetic search into the Moon's symbolizing and back to the lunar symbolization of *ansa lunata* in the Terramara pottery of the Apennine culture and vessels of Central Europe of the Middle to Late Bronze Age. According to The Cambridge Ancient History "The most characteristic pottery shapes are vessels with one or two *ansa lunata* handles..." (The Cambridge Ancient History, 2003, p.59). Nevertheless having faced with a completely different mode of survival, humankind had an exigence of switching over to another symbolization, namely to the Sun's symbolizing.

Differentiability of the symbol

Differentiability of the symbol results from its capability to distinguish meanings. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of "The Wall" which separates reality from deceit and illusion and simultaneously reunites them again. The lunar symbol had been able to play this part for hunters but producers were able to carry on their audacious experiments in the daylight. So metaphorically they managed to build a higher wall to separate reality from illusion. The solar symbol turned out to become more appropriate for clearing that cultural demarcation line. In accordance with J.Baudrillard's suggestion "the symbolic is neither a concept, nor an instance or a category, nor a 'structure', but an act of exchange and a social relation which puts an end to the real, which resolves the real, and in the same stroke the opposition between the *real* and the imaginary" (Baudrillard, 2000, p.243).

The influence of differentiability of the symbol on modern culture is exemplified with its active and often aggressive use of advertising which affects individual and mass consciousness by means of signs, images, and metaphors. Due to this pervasive influence the illusion and reality mix up in their division and opposition, stereotypes of

behavior of the person in a society are engaged and perfected, the concept of prestigiousness is also formed while social and economic differentiation goes deeper. In the framework of modern globalization, society is erecting a civilization wall behind which the person tries to survive and succeed. The wall threatens all of us with a collapse turning into a deadlock wall of current global problems. Their urgent solving depends not only on technologies but first of all on man's capabilities to distinguish and predict consequences of his actions. Developing these capabilities during culture transitions is exercised through the reflective reference to backbone symbols. Thus, chaotizing energy of the symbol helps differentiate meanings and thereby makes for promoting culture transition from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture as it had done thousands years ago. Exactly so the solar symbol was put into operation having collected novel senses connected with the newly invented survival through primitive crop farming and animal husbandry. The wall between reality and illusion was consolidated in radiant sunbeams whilst the confrontation of man and nature became aggravated in their new dialogue.

Substantiveness of the symbol

The symbol is substantive being capable to embody systems of meanings. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of "The Garden of Diverging Paths" which leave the uniform indivisible point—the primeval sense—for polysemantic space and then they converge in a uniform world outlook. At first it was the lunar worship with the relevant world outlook which was finally superseded by the solar adoration with its culmination in Ancient Egypt.

A well-known example of concomitant expansion of substantiveness of the symbol in the symbolical sphere was the construction of the Egyptian pyramids—Pharaohs' gigantic tombs. The

ancient Egypt culture crystallization took place having been uniquely developed from the first brick mastabas to majestic stone constructions. In the spiritual sphere the pyramidal form symbolized the final confirmation of a Pharaoh as a deity. All pyramids were geographically oriented that proves not only a high level of the Ancient Egyptians' astronomical knowledge but also their symbolical connexion with number four. The erection of every pyramid was the most important act of a cult and ought to have expressed a mystical identity of the country and its ruler (History of Art, 1998).

The symbolical primeval sense (man in the face of nature) of the Ancient Egypt culture filled the creation of the pyramids with sign-bearing, image-bearing, and metaphor-bearing expressions. And the pyramids had already been considered in Antiquity as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The pyramid was required by Egyptians as a symbol of the "eternal present" and it was really a core of their culture for it symbolized stability and permanency of both cosmic and social order of their life. Thus, the ordering energy of the symbol fills its symbolical sphere with the contents of signs, images, and metaphors and thereby it promotes culture transition from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture. But from the very beginning it had been step by step a culture transition to a very well developed agricultural civilization along the Nile banks. And it was not surprising that both the sense systems of the lunar and solar symbols became interpenetrating in the Egyptian agricultural civilization. Myths had frequently matched the Moon and the Sun as a primeval integrality: henceforward as probably the Chinese Yang and Yin. The Egyptian headdress with an image of the sun disc enclosed by the horns of the moon, was created as a first symbolic integrality of the Sun and the Moon (Tressider, 1999, Moon). Thus it was a model culture transition from tribal



Available at: <http://blogspot.ru/2009/09/winged-sun-disk-symbol-of-ancient.html> [Accessed 28 June 2013]

societies to the emergence of historically remote agrarian states, Ancient Egypt being a shining star among them all.

Imperativeness of the symbol

The symbol is capable to operate with imperative ordering of meanings. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of "The Shadow" which constantly and persistently pursues culture with phantoms of its past states: successes and failures, honors and dishonors, virtues and sins. Imperativeness of the symbol originates from the primeval sense which prevents the symbol from being dissolved in a variety of senses and meanings. Imperativeness provides the symbol with the power to regulate culture development by reconstruction of certain systems of signs, images, metaphors. It is shown, e.g., in impulses to Eros and Thanatos (Z.Freud). Man strives to overcome Thanatos to make it non-existent and to create something that has a cultural sense to be beyond existing signs, images, metaphors. Nevertheless, Thanatos' shadow hangs over man who tries and overcomes its fatal effect by resorting to creativity and art. Art origins and developments are to meet the needs that are sort of foreshadows at first and then realized in creating and recreating an actually human character of man's ability to live and man himself as a general and universal human being (New Philosophy Encyclopedia, 2010. Vol. II. Art, p.161). Art's power of influence on life and man is really infinite. In art, generalization is made up

by means of transition from one concrete state to another and so that image creation is necessarily sense creation as a play of subtle symbolical senses. Man himself gets developed into a symbol. Thus, the triumphant imperativeness of the solar symbol makes for culture transition from the lunar symbol with its fading imperativeness and consequently to the agricultural civilization with its vividly bright imperativeness.

Communicativeness of the symbol

The symbol is capable to communicate encoded meanings. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of “The Tower of Babel” construction. For thousands of years has mankind been seeking after a general “lingua franca” to be employed in intercultural communications. Due to its communicativeness the symbol recreates sign structures-communicates in culture as pre-images of a new Tower of Babel. To exemplify it nowadays, the action of the symbol’s communicativeness is vividly realized in the expansion of communicative functions of such a societal institute as the museum (Gnedovsky, 1994). Since the late XXth century the museum has been developing beyond its function to be only an exhibition space and using extensive possibilities of communications with the visitors. Another example, now libraries have been following the same way. The processes of this kind might be rooted deep to transition from hunters and gatherers’ petroglyphs of the lunar symbol culture to ancient Egyptian artists’ paintings on the walls of their temples depicting tillers of the solar culture.

The “Tower of Babel” sign of symbolical knowledge expands the field of functioning of spiritual processes of culture transitions. The symbol’s communicativeness resulting from its zero structure ensures expansion of intercultural exchange of signs, images, metaphors, e.g., symbol-signs of the Moon and the Sun in all kinds

of cultures of two different types: immediate consumption and deferred consumption as a result of producing. It is appropriate to mention here that our relevant zero structure is correlated to Umberto Eco’s absent structure which he interprets as rather a “locus of incessant ‘play’” than a certain structure lying in depth (Эко, 2004, p.31). The depth and the incessant ‘play’ are of course referred to human relations in evolving societies.

Teleologicality of the symbol

The symbol is capable to make meanings purposeful. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of “Sisyphus” in whose image mankind strives for an illusory purpose of mastering the primeval sense whilst creating a symbolical web of meanings in culture. Due to its teleological nature the symbol launches cultures towards “the start and the goal of the world process, from the first motions of consciousness right to the state of being hurled back into nothingness...” (Nietzsche, 1874, p.36).

In passionate seeking for the primeval sense (the origin of man) as far back as in the ancient world, people even set up secret societies to cognize mysterious meanings and transfer them to initiates. A classical example is Manly P. Hall’s investigating these processes in his “Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy” (Hall, 1993).

To exemplify a fixed result of changing culture and its symbolic system, let us remember Eleusinian mysteries or Orphics’ religious and mystical movement. For instance the former had the sense of a harvest festival to celebrate by every Indo-European (Eliade, 2002). Thus, the teleologicality of the symbol makes for a cultural transition from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture. As to the symbols under consideration, the teleological

character of the lunar symbol is borne again in the teleological character of the solar symbol. As a matter of fact, the Moon was a symbol of cyclical affluence, rebirth, immortality in a lot of cultures whereas the Sun became a symbol of creative energy towards greater affluence with the same immortality.

Duality of the symbol

The symbol is dual in that it is a union of form and content. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of “Gilgamesh” who personifies ubiquity of the symbol in culture. The duality of the symbol’s inner nature generates ordering and chaotizing energies in spiritual processes of cultural transitions. The symbol’s duality is found in the most secret corners of culture. The symbol in its duality trips like a lotus flower—steadily and meditatively, and in this way it is similar to one of the categories of the Old Chinese philosophy—the Tao: “The Tao is like a well: used but never used up. It is like the eternal void: filled with infinite possibilities” (Lao-tzu. Tao Te Ching, from chapter 4).

Bundles of energy of human experience in interacting with both the moonlight and the sunlight permeated the culture in transition from the lunar symbolism to the solar symbolics. That took place in the past and at present a most interesting phenomenon is the spiritual transition developing in the Western culture of the early third Millennium. Perhaps this transition is preceded by an era of profound symbolic transformation and the advent of super-symbolic civilization on a global scale. Russia is increasingly being involved into this whirlpool, too. The European transition lies in the eternal reversion of values that are Apollonian in their form and Dionysian in their nature.

Any transition process resembles the rough sea off the coast: it begins as high tide and ends as low tide. So it was ebb and flow during the

transition to the agricultural civilization and so now the earthmen are moving to the latest economy based on knowledge. The high tide is saturated with Apollo’s energy—desire for unity, solidarity, integration, order. The low tide with Dionysus’ energy tends to destruction, fragmentation, individuation, chaos. At its culmination the transition process reaches its peak where the transition crucial chance is determined—at this point of the mythical full moon period the symbols are activated and generate a dispersion of symbolic fields which are transformed at the frontier of the zero structures. The contemporary transition process is already at the stage of rising because the symbols of new Europe pulsate with renewed vigor. They lack only the energy of an insurgent who would become a stimulus of symbolic fields dispersion, a new hero, a new “good European.” If Socrates and Plato had not appeared in Ancient Greece, Europe would have been very different now, full of Thales’ water or amusing itself with Heraclitus’ fire.

F.Nietzsche preached to love the country of children, of those who need to be loved, for those distant but not yet present “good Europeans” were his children. Zarathustra is still faster running away from us although we can become his near relations but love of the distant will make him run much faster from the present “good Europeans.” Where are you—the new “good Europeans”—the children of chaos and nostalgia, those proclaimed decadents of nihilism of symbols? F.Nietzsche completes Chapter VII of his “Beyond Good and Evil” with the following, “Oh Europe! Europe! We know the horned animal which was always most attractive to thee, from which danger is ever again threatening thee! Thy old fable might once more become “history”—an immense stupidity might once again overmaster thee and carry thee away! And no God concealed beneath it—no! only an “idea,” a “modern idea”!” (Nietzsche, 1886, Chapter VII. Our Virtues).

Reflecting on the symbolic situations of the past, we are peering into the present symbolic situation where we are able to see how almost everywhere there has been emerging a fuzzy model of culture so far—the culture of new pattern which is open to future extraneous ideas and at the same time seeking to preserve its own identity in the past. There springs up a new culture in which there is borne “a new system of wealth creation.” It is anticipated to be knowledge-based and relying less on wealth and violence (Toffler, 2001). There is being formed a model of epoch-making spiritual transition whereby the pattern of the spiritual processes development of culture transitions amongst the contemporary Western cultures progressively tends to a state of trans-traditional culture with its own symbols.

Polysemy of the symbol

The symbol is capable to operate with a variety of its meanings. Symbolical knowledge is featured by the sign of “The City of the Marked Cow” in which multiple shades of meanings mix up. The polysemy of the symbol makes for chaotization of the variety of meanings, mixes up models by destroying traditional taboos. It is vividly displayed in contemporary art, e.g., in some works by one of the most well-known, mysterious and disputable American artists Matthew Barney who has been working with large-scale installations and video films. The most scandalous product of his creativity is a serial of five video films “Cremaster” where the artist reproduces a mythical world of images of the postindustrial epoch. All the five parts of “Cremaster” are rich with Masonic signs and hyperbolic persons and objects as if arrested in space and time (Barney, 2002).

In the European art the transition from a dominating role of substantiveness of the symbol to almost hypertrophied pressure of its polysemy happened in the XXth century that was expressed

in a mixture of genres, emergence of installations and performances in the creative works from the French-American painter, sculptor and writer Marcel Duchamp to the Dutch photographer Erwin Olaf and other stylish artists.

Not only in mass pop culture but also in graphic and dancing art there were exploded secrecy and intimacy as fast as many taboos connected with showing naked bodies. The instances under discussion show intense symbolicalness in the transitive state of culture. The “new” art creators themselves reflect the culture crisis in their artistic images. Their contemporary art actually sneers at “clip-culture” (A. Toffler’s term). It makes sense to conclude that every iteratively accomplished Copernican revolution in culture derived its strength in the polysemy of the symbol which due to the developing of its new meanings, allowed the system of commonplace conceptions to grow more flexible thus determining its dynamic development without losing its inner content.

The symbol polysemy results from its zero structure which “preserves” the primeval sense in its primordality by transforming the meanings bombarding it into its own reflexions. Thus, the chaotizing energy of the symbol mixes up multiplicity of meanings and their shades making for culture transition from a state of traditional culture to a state of trans-traditional culture. How was that in the civilization’s green past? We cannot know for certain but we can suppose again that the primitive man’s perception of the two tantalizing and symbolizing luminaries happened to undergo the process of transition. We can dwell upon how the solar symbol turned out to operate with a much greater variety of its meanings. Our ancestors could be visually convinced of that in the fruitful solar energy for their crop plants whilst the intuitive beginning of that evidence had been with gatherers.

Starting from the above analysis of the important role of such inherent characteristics

of the integral symbol as universality, differentiability, substantiveness, imperativeness, communicativeness, teleologicality, duality, polysemy and on the basis of the development of the appropriate features of symbolic knowledge (“Pandora”, “The Wall”, “The Garden of Diverging Paths”, “The Shadow”, “The Tower of Babel”, “Sisyphus”, “Gilgamesh”, “The City of Marked Cow”), we can reasonably believe that cultures in the trans-traditional state develop towards the culmination of this state with the prospect of returning to the state of traditional culture again. It is not improbable that the actual epochal transition will be associated with the genesis of a super-symbolic civilization and activation of super-symbolic consciousness and creativity. The spiritual processes of culture transitions are connected with the issue what unites or could unite Europe today besides integrated economic space and a free visa system. Whether the European spirit is still topical in differentiating the denying West from the creating East.

The Western culture is largely based on the symbol of negation and being appreciably intoxicated it follows in the escort of Dionysian mysteries, while the Eastern culture dreams Apollonian dreaming. Peering into a symbolic map of the world let us think together with Zarathustra about new tablets of a single, inseparable, unattainable and forever pulsating Zoroastrian fire—that primeval sense that the Giants-builders of the tower of Babel had lost in their fight against a new Ruler. The Tower of Babel was destroyed and collapsed and cut the world by its fragments into two eternally opposing parts—the East and the West, Asia and Europe. The pacified East, similar to the ancient Taoist, contemplated and lived in harmony with the world, while the West was unbalanced waving the flags of civilization and aristocratism. Most of the Western nations had been chaotically attacking the world to no purpose for centuries. The West was against the

Rest. However, “The ultimate purpose of culture is recreation of mankind” (Bely, 1994, p.23). So, upon closer examination the Eastern and Western world views prove to be not so different because there is an inseparable universal symbolic spiritual unity in them.

Symbolizing has always been contradictory and burdened with antinomies. Discrepancies find their ways in all kinds of crises. Against the background of the West-East eternal confrontation, the interconfessional relations have been worsened lately. The crisis was shown in the sensational events related to the caricatures of Prophet Mohammed a few years ago. All of a sudden the unprecedented diffusion of the English language all over the world, globanglization—(the term is ours. – D.A., N.I.)—has dashed against the rejection of the American mass culture and the language purism in many countries.

Another crisis in the art has been rather long identified and characterized by the slogan “art for art’s sake”, and by compilations of different genres, and by decadent frames of mind (e.g. exhibitions of anatomized human corpses by an infamous avant-garde artist Gunther von Hagens, notorious prose by Vladimir Sorokin and some other repulsive extravagancies). The contemporary art has been agonizing in search of new symbol forms: extravagant signs, images, metaphors. These trends suggest that the Western culture is in a state of trans-traditional culture. Europe is waiting for its heroes to struggle for another culture transition.

This refers both to the philosophy of culture and to the philosophy of science. The leading domestic and foreign philosophers express their disappointment with absolutization of the Western and sophistic project of science that is determined by the principle of freedom of the scientist’s will. They try and protect the Aristotelian principle of perfection. Thus, in Professor N.M.Churinov’s conception “the main thing is that the cosmic,

dialectical, information project of science is being strongly asserted in the field of scientific knowledge now. ...along with the development of the crisis of contemporary civilization it appears as a real way to resolve the crisis, the way in which scientists can find productive research results indicating the azimuth of the salvation of mankind, the azimuth of solving the global problems” (Churinov, 2006, p.94).

The symbolic reality as the most important human dimension of information reality and as a *sui generis* structure, needs to be understood in terms of the “completing principle of perfection” since the free creation of symbolic forms is not nearly enough realize another culture transition which challenges the contemporary civilization. Man in a culture is able to achieve the perfection of creativity only through the development of his or her own spiritual perfection wherein we can see a reflection of the primeval sense—the deepest sense of human existence. Thinkers of all times and races have never let the concept of human integrity and “the ideal of a perfect human being and his general meaning of life” sink into oblivion. “Ideals of perfect human integrity are reflected in specified visual images in every culture. These ideals are colorfully embodied by cultural heroes.” (Zhukovsky, Pivovarov, 2012, p.48). Moreover, in our opinion, cultural heroes as such develop into integral symbols in the process of a culture transition.

Conclusion

Symbols and culture are integral parts of each other and their close relationship began in the remotest primitive society where they determined human development in a syncretic way. Man’s persistent efforts in searching for the sense of his existence—his primeval sense—perpetually come back as new spirals of culture transitions. Over and over again do these pursuits wrap social being with diverse symbols. The

symbols and their active “intervention” in the spiritual processes of culture transitions might and do burst into a “clash of civilizations” (Samuel Huntington’s term) in our insecure world. Indeed, not only economic and some other factors but above all else intercultural differences during a culture transition are found at the root of every disagreement to really cause the current global conflicts. Against the background of universalist tendencies and globalization the contemporary world is burdened with cultural contradictions and first and foremost symbolic discrepancies. Anyway, once mankind was already at the threshold of the ancient culture transition supported by the transition from the plentiful lunar symbolism towards the ubiquitous solar symbolics. As a result, the fruitful Agricultural Civilization came into being. Then mankind invented the machine industry. As a result, the Industrial Civilization brought progress whilst driving away nature and natural symbolics. New symbols came down like industrial parts from assembly lines in more and more numerous quantities. They very often derailed and deorbited and went down like RMS Titanic. Nowadays the present-day mankind is again at the threshold of still another culture transition and most probably the information civilization in its culmination would develop into a super-symbolic civilization. New survivalists might not be those who could be able to learn, forget and relearn but those who could be able to symbolize and desymbolize, to constantly create and change symbols. Peering into how people are working hard to create their wealth, one cannot but already discern three wealth creating systems that are radically different from each other. A.Toffler believes that a “plow, assembly lines, and computer” can serve as their “generalized symbols” now. But symbols are able to do much more.

Symbols have constantly interfered with transient processes. People have been observing

this throughout human history and the history of philosophies. The symbol penetrates into human existence making it defined and unlimited at the same time because, on the one hand, the symbolic sphere imperatively determines and frames the scope of a human being, and on the other hand, man himself proves to be a symbol when he expands its sense to a boundless desert. And it is also dangerous. In Friedrich Nietzsche's words in his Poetic Writings "the desert devours and strangles" (Nietzsche, 1889).

Symbolism as world understanding, as it was called by Andrei Bely in his treatise of the same title, has a number of leading positions in the spiritual environment of culture and the social environment of the state ideology

(Bely, 1994). Therefore the issue of the nature of symbolism, arising at the origins of our emerging information civilization, is highly relevant in the modern paradigm of pre-transient state. What awaits us: the destruction of our "Tower of Babel" and the construction of new symbolic systems under the banner of the primeval sense? Or further strengthening of the functioning religions and philosophies which heterogeneity prevents the unification of countries and peoples more often than not? The study of symbolic sphere, namely the symbol and symbolism in the context of spiritual processes of culture transitions, can be helpful in discovering innovation approaches to our burning challenges.

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Символьная поддержка культурных переходов

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В статье выдвинута гипотеза о том, что символ (или скорее, изменение системы символов) способен поддерживать культурные переходы. Атрибуты символа (универсальность, дифференцируемость, содержательность, императивность, коммуникативность, телеологичность, двойственность, многозначность), развиваемые на протяжении всей истории, устойчиво играют регулятивную роль в духовных процессах перехода от состояния традиционной культуры к состоянию транстредиционной культуры.

Аналогичные соображения высказаны о переходе от собирательства к производству и, как следствие, от культуры собирательства к агрокультуре. Изобретателям сельского хозяйства и их последователям удалось успешно объединить свои первобытные понятия и таинственные символы и тем самым изобрести первый фундаментальный культурный переход, поддержанный процессом замены лунного символа солнечным символом, возникновение и самостоятельность которого было самым ярким символическим воплощением культурного перехода того времени.

Ключевые слова: человек, символ, лунная символика, солнечная символика, первобытный, цивилизация, культурный переход, сельское хозяйство.
